

A  
LETTER

FROM

J. B. *alias* OLDCUTT,

To his Friend

Mr. JENKS.

SIR;

**T**HO it be long since I wrote to you, yet I doubt not but my Name is fresh in your Memory. I was extremely troubled, when I heard of your Disappointment in the Election of Sheriff, because I know it would have made for our Interest. At first it did somewhat amuse me, that you should buse so much about an Office, which usually others have endeavoured to shun; but at length I conjectured the Cause, and believ'd you were put upon't by some of our *Old Friends*, who would have assisted you in the Charge. I am told you have some thoughts of Standing for a Member in Parliament this next Election in the City, it would manifestly contribute to the Interest now driving; but I fear you will receive a Defeat: Take not your Measures by my success, that having but 60*l.* *per ann.* except my Wives Estate, have carried the Election against them of 3000*l.* *per ann.* thanks to my good Friends of the *Old Cutt*: But all the Counties in *England* are not like *Suffex*. Our Friend Mr. *Trenshard*, I hear hath lost it at *Taunton*; some Men cannot cajole their Party so well as others. I know very well the heat of your Temper, and inaptitude of your Mind, for the Management of any thing beyond your common Commerce; How do you think the City can judge that Man moderate and wise, who hurries himself into a Prison, for no other cause, but the overboiling of his Spirit? The strength of the Passion always betrays the Weakness of the Passionate; that thing that you would most wish for, you should seem most to decline, it was *O. C.* his Maxim.

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Maxim. I find the People generally too apprehensive of the Miseries that accrued to them by the late Civil Wars, to run into the like Defolation; nor can I wonder at it, when I consider, that there is not one scarce to be found, that rais'd himself a Monument of Honour or Wealth, by those unnatural Brolls; but on the contrary, they who were most active therein, are long since swallowed up in Obloquy, and their Posterities stigmatiz'd with Poverty and Infamy, which I look upon as a just Judgment upon them, for making the Holy Letter of Life and Peace, the most forceable Instruments of Mortal Quarrel and Contention; who dealt with Scripture, as *Chymists* deal with Natural Bodies, strive to Extract that out of them, which God nor Nature never put into them. Wonder not, that I vary from my former Stile of writing to you; for really, mature thoughts of things hath opened my Eyes, and I am become a Convert *Christian*, that is to say, an honest Man; and an honest Moral Man is a *Christian* by the surer side. I must confess to you, I am against desiring to mend what is already well.

As for the Government, I see no cause of Complaint, unless there be a Latitude of too much Liberty, which I am lorry to see men make no better use of than Children do, abuse it, and Worm-like, eat out the heart of the Plant that breeds it.

Men of craz'd Minds, that they have scarce an equality of sense with Beasts, are grown so skittish with this thing, call'd Liberty, that they are almost ready to fly in the Face of Majesty, and would lawlessly require Reasons for all outward Occurrences of State, which their uncautelous Capacities can no more keep pace with, than a Child can with *Hercules*. I pray God, our Posterities may not be plagu'd with the want of that Plenty and Liberty; the abundance of which their Fathers have so wantonly abus'd.

How many are there that calumniate the Person, when they cannot reach the Cause, and no kind of reason so much abuses, as when the Discredit of the Person is Retorted on the Cause.

A Railer is rank'd by St. *Paul* with a Fornicator and a Thief, and with such, saith he, partake not, no not so much as to eat; and certainly Railers against Government, are the worst sort of all, and for ought I know, those that he specially means.

I fear, those you call good Common-Wealths-Men, are a different kind of thing to honest Men.

*Fabritius*, in the *Roman* Story, is much commended for nominating to the Consulship *Ruffinus*, a Factious Man, and his utter Enemy, because he knew him to be serviceable to the Common-Wealth; perhaps those that opposed your Election, were not well read in History.

It is not a seeming Sanctity, that makes the Honest Man; the cheat of pretending to Gospel Light, hath been detected long since; you may remember, that the precepts of submitting to Rules, rather than

than call the Magistrate to Revenge; of suffering wrong, rather than doing; of yielding the Coat to him that would take the Cloak; of readiness to receive more wrongs, rather than to Revenge one. These and all the Evangelical Commands of the like nature, have we heretofore found out, favourable Interpretations, Glosses and Evasions to wind our selves out of, and yet pass for most zealous Christians.

When we Receded from the Church of *Rome*, one Motive was, because she added unto Scripture her Glosses as Canonical, to supply what the plain Text of Scripture could not yield, and that I have often thought was a Fault among us, the *quondam* pretenders to Reformation; we pull'd down *Babel*, and set up an *Ephod*, to meet the Church of *Rome* in the same point we left her.

Excuse me, if I am plain with you, I intend you nor the least disquiet, only an honest reprehension.

I know you are a pious Man; Religion usually takes up his Winter Quarters in Age, and therefore I doubt not, but you will be the readier to forgive me.

The last Week was transmitted hither in Print the Substance of a Speech made by that Worthy Knight (as the Printer styles him) Sir T. P. I perceive by it, that his main drift is to Irritate the People against his R. H. in point of Religion; and truly I thought, when so bold a *Lutheran*, had set up a Top, all the whole City would have whipt it; but I since understand, it was a Game the Wiser heads dislik'd, and that he hath promised to make no more Speeches again in haste. I remember I have heretofore read a Book, written by a Jesuit. in King *James's* time, who asserted it meritorious, to oppose that Kings Right to the Crown, because he was a *Protestant*: And we in this age assert it Meritorious to oppose the Succession of his R. H. because (as is presum'd only) a R. C. *Carra Lex*, is the Property of every Subject, God forbid it should be denied our Prince.

Sir, I must tell you, that it is to be fear'd, they that Propagate this Cavil, before it comes to be a Question, and possibly never may be one, have something under their Thumbs, that I can guess at as well as they; the Serpent cannot Lurk to close, but it will be seen. I wish from my Soul that there is not more thoughts of blood among some that would seem to defend us against it, than in the Enemies of our Church. I am jealous of it for this cause; I find the great Stricklers against his R. H. are most of them of our Family or Relation, the *Old-Cutts* of 41.

Once set aside the immediate Heir, and then it will naturally come in question, who shall succeed; an excellent work for Commotion.

Come Sir, let me advise you, look into your heart betimes, have a care of being Popular at a deer price; feed not, to Danger, tho it be on a Dish you love.

The *Heathens* were so exceeding cautious in this point; that it is said the *Manichees* were of opinion, it was not lawful to violate any thing in which there was Life, and therefore would not so much as pull a Branch from a Tree, because there was Life in it.

And *Xenophon* tells us, that the Souldiers in *Cyrus* his Army were so well Disciplin'd, that one of them in time of Battle, having lift up his Arm to strike his Enemy, hearing the Trumpet at that Moment sound a Retreat, let fall his Arm, and willingly lost his blow. So far were these men from thinking it lawful to shed blood in time of Peace, that they would not shed the blood of an Enemy in time of War, except in a just and lawful Battle. For shame let us not learn Morals from Heathens. But what have I done! I am run out of a Letter into a History. The desire I have, that all the Nation should be as honest as my self, true Lovers of the Established Church and Government, promoters of Peace and Concord, abhorers of causeless Jealousies and Fears, and of all such as are given to Change; moderate Rectifiers of Enormities, where any such are justly met with, and Retrievers of Time, rather than openers of Breaches; which Wisdom and Righteousness should close, hath made me more prolix than I intended.

But I shall conclude with this Wish, That God in his due time would hasten you and all yours to the Possession of that Glory Sir T. P. seems so well assur'd of, in which I am sure I am

Your Friend and Well-wisher,

Chichester,  
Sept. 2. 1679.

J. B. alias Old-cutt.

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